



Designation: E2727 – 18

Standard Practice for Assessment of Rainwater Quality¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This practice provides a methodology for assessing rainwater quality.

1.1.1 This practice identifies a set of research and reporting requirements that will permit the intended user to assess the rainwater quality of a catchment area of a particular site.

1.1.2 This practice characterizes rainwater quality in general and identifies site conditions that may affect rainwater quality. Where site conditions affecting rainwater exist, additional assessment techniques may be required.

1.1.3 Objectives guiding the development of this practice are (1) to synthesize and put in writing good commercial and customary practice for rainwater quality assessment; (2) to facilitate high quality, standardized water stewardship protocols; and (3) to clarify a standard of due diligence that is practical and reasonable.

1.2 This practice does not establish design requirements for rainwater harvesting systems. However, it may provide information in support of decisions relative to design and implementation of rainwater harvesting projects.

1.3 This practice does not identify use(s) of rainwater, commercial or otherwise. However, it may provide information in support of decisions relative to evaluation of property conditions and development options.

1.4 This practice offers a set of instructions for performing one or more specific operations. This document cannot replace education or experience and should be used in conjunction with professional judgment.

1.4.1 Water laws vary among governing jurisdictions. It is the responsibility of the user of this practice to determine regulatory requirements applicable to rainwater quality assessment and potential use(s).

1.5 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses are mathematical conversions to inch-pound units that are provided for information only and are not considered standard.

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E60 on Sustainability and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E60.07 on Water Use and Conservation.

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1.6 This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety, health, and environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.

1.7 This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

E1527 Practice for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Process

E1528 Practice for Limited Environmental Due Diligence: Transaction Screen Process

E2114 Terminology for Sustainability Relative to the Performance of Buildings

E2635 Practice for Water Conservation in Buildings Through In-Situ Water Reclamation

2.2 EPA Document:³

CERCLA Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, commonly known as Superfund

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 For terms related to sustainability relative to the performance of buildings, refer to Terminology E2114.

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *adjacent site, n*—any property or properties the border of which is contiguous or partially contiguous with that of the property, or that would be contiguous or partially contiguous

² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

³ Available from United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), William Jefferson Clinton Bldg., 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20460, <http://www.epa.gov>.

with that of the property but for a street, road, public thoroughfare, or other physical barrier separating them.

3.2.2 *brownfield site, n*—real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

3.2.2.1 *Discussion*—The term “brownfield site” does not include a site described in Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly known as Superfund, Section 101(39)(B), even though this language tracks the definition of “brownfield site” in CERCLA Section 101(39)(A) and (B).

3.2.3 *building department records, n*—those records of the local government in which the property is located indicating permission of the local government to construct, alter, or demolish improvements on the property.

3.2.4 *catchment area, n*—surface, including hard roofs, from which rainwater may be collected.

3.2.5 *first flush filter, n*—device that automatically diverts the first flow of rainwater collected from the catchment area.

3.2.5.1 *Discussion*—A first flush filter device usually contains a temporary storage of 50–100 L (13.21–26.42 gal) (although size is determined by specific design objectives of the rainwater harvesting system) and a simple valve unit consisting of a ball and seat. The initial rainfall fills the storage and floats the ball until it rises up to the seat, blocking the opening to the storage.

3.2.6 *intended user, n*—individual or organization identified by the entity assessing rainwater quality as being the one who relies on that information to make decisions.

3.2.6.1 *Discussion*—The intended user could be the client, the responsible party, program administrators, regulators, the financial community or other affected stakeholders, such as local communities, governmental agencies, or non-governmental organizations.

3.2.7 *nonpotable water, n*—water that has not been treated for human consumption in conformance with applicable drinking water quality regulations.

3.2.8 *other contaminated site, n*—a facility that is described in Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly known as Superfund, Section 101(39)(B).

3.2.8.1 *Discussion*—A facility that is listed on the National Priorities List⁴ or is proposed for listing would be an example of a contaminated site.

3.2.9 *potable water, n*—water that does not endanger the lives or health of human beings and that conforms to applicable regulations for drinking water quality.

3.2.10 *rainwater harvesting, v*—collecting rainwater from a catchment area and storing it for future use.

3.2.11 *recognized environmental condition, n*—the presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products that may affect the catchment area.

3.2.11.1 *Discussion*—The term includes hazardous substances or petroleum products even under conditions in compliance with laws. The term is not intended to include *de minimis* conditions that generally do not present a threat to human health or the environment and that generally would not be the subject of an enforcement action if brought to the attention of appropriate governmental agencies. Conditions determined to be *de minimis* are not recognized environmental conditions.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 As the world’s population increases, so does the need for water to meet various needs. Rainwater harvesting offers a viable, sustainable approach to satisfying various water needs.

4.1.1 Rainwater harvesting may be the only source of water supply for many rural and remote households where no other water supply is available. In urban and suburban locations, rainwater harvesting may help public water systems reduce peak demands and help delay the need for expanding water treatment plants.

4.1.2 Rainwater harvesting can reduce storm water runoff, nonpoint source pollution, and erosion in urban environments.

4.1.3 Rainwater harvesting provides for redundancies and diversified systems that decrease security issues associated with centralized facilities.

4.2 An assessment of rainwater quality is necessary for determination of appropriate uses for water collected and stored in rainwater harvesting systems. This practice identifies a set of research and reporting requirements that will permit the intended user to assess the rainwater quality of a particular site.

5. Baseline Characterization of Rain Water Quality

5.1 Assumptions:

5.1.1 The following assumptions are utilized in delineating baseline rain water quality.

5.1.1.1 Rainwater is considered uncontaminated until it falls on a surface.

5.1.1.2 Proper maintenance is provided for the rainwater harvesting system in accordance with recommendations of the system manufacturer.

5.1.1.3 Rainwater that is collected (that is, harvested rainwater) through a leaf/debris screen of minimum 8 mm (0.32 in.) and an insect screen of minimum 1 mm (0.039 in.) stainless steel mesh, after a first flush filter, and does not have unique site considerations as identified in Section 6 shall be assumed to have the baseline quality characteristics listed herein.

5.2 Baseline Quality Characteristics:

5.2.1 *pH* — 6.0 – 7.0.

5.2.2 *Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD)* — ≤10 mg/L (0.00035 oz/0.26 gal).

5.2.3 *Nephelometric Turbidity Unit (NTU)* — ≤2.

5.2.4 *Fecal Coliform*—No detectable fecal *coli*/100 mL (0.027 gal).

5.2.5 *Sodium*—No detectable sodium/100 mL (0.027 gal).

⁴ The National Priorities List (NPL) is a list compiled by EPA pursuant to CERCLA 42 U.S.C. § 9605(a)(8)(B) of properties with the highest priority for cleanup pursuant to EPA’s Hazard Ranking System. (See 40 C.F.R. Part 300.)

5.2.6 *Chlorine*—No detectable chlorine/100 mL (0.027 gal).

5.2.7 *Enteroviruses*—No detectable enteroviruses/100 mL (0.027 gal).

6. Unique Site Considerations Review Process

6.1 The contents of rainwater may vary by geographical region and by unique site considerations. Water can collect and transport particulates and debris. Water can function as a solvent, absorbing contaminants and minerals. Thus, baseline rainwater quality may be affected by the surfaces and substances with which it comes in contact.

6.2 Review of the site considerations listed in **Table 1** is intended to identify recognized environmental conditions. Recognized environmental conditions will affect water quality and may limit use of rainwater in potable water applications or non-potable water applications, or both.

6.2.1 *Accuracy and Completeness*—Accuracy and completeness of record information varies among information sources, including governmental sources. Record information is often inaccurate or incomplete. The entity providing an assessment is not obligated to identify mistakes or insufficiencies

in information provided, but shall make a reasonable effort to identify mistakes or insufficiencies that are suspected or may be determined during review of site considerations.

6.2.2 *Reasonably Ascertainable/Standard Sources*—Availability of record information varies by source, including governmental jurisdictions. The entity providing an assessment is not obligated to identify, obtain, or review every possible record that might exist with respect to a property. Instead, this practice identifies record information that shall be reviewed from standard sources, and such that is reasonably ascertainable from those standard sources. Record information that is reasonably ascertainable means (1) information that is publicly available, (2) information that is obtainable from its source within reasonable time and cost constraints, and (3) information that is practically reviewable.

6.2.3 *Publicly Available*—Information that is publicly available means that the source of the information allows access to the information by anyone upon request.

6.2.4 *Reasonable Time and Cost*—Information that is obtainable within reasonable time and cost constraints means that the information will be provided by the source within 20 calendar days of receiving a written, telephone, or in person

TABLE 1 Site Consideration Review Questions

Question	Conclusion		Sources Supporting Conclusion		
	No	Yes	Observation	Documents	Interviews
Is the catchment in an urban environment?					
Is the catchment within 500 m (1640 ft) of a busy road or highway?					
Is the catchment within 500 m (1640 ft) of an agricultural property that is not fully organic?					
Is the catchment within 500 m (1640 ft) of an industrial facility?					
Is the catchment within 500 m (1640 ft) of a fueling station?					
Is the catchment within 500 m (1640 ft) of a railroad or 1 km (0.62 mi) of a rail yard?					
Is the catchment within 1 km (0.62 mi) of an airport?					
Is the catchment within 500 m (1640 ft) of a brownfield or other contaminated property?					
Has an environmental Site Assessment conducted in accordance with Practice E1527 or Practice E1528, or both, reported a recognized environmental condition within 500 m (1640 ft) of the catchment area?					
Is there evidence of recognized environmental conditions within 500 m (1640 ft) of the catchment area?					
Is the catchment area within 10 km (6.2 mi) of coastal waters?					
Are there any other unique site conditions, including recent events and temporary conditions, that indicate potential to contaminate the catchment area?					